

MARCH 2003



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## Alternatives selected for further study

### *Five possible roadway improvement options recommended*

Earlier this winter, the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) presented seven alternatives that were developed based on suggestions from the public, design feasibility, and to meet the purpose and need for improvements. The alternatives included a "no-action" option, improvements to the existing US 12 alignment, and some bypass alternatives as shown on Page 2.

WisDOT reviewed each of the alternatives with the US 12 Fort Atkinson Advisory Committee and considered the committee's comments. As a result, WisDOT has recommended five alternatives for further study as part of the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement, or EIS, that examines possible improvements to the US 12 corridor in the Fort Atkinson area.

WisDOT recommended Alternatives 1, 2, 3, 5, and 7 for further study. Alternative 4, or the "Outer East" alternative, and Alternative 6, the "Inner South" alternative, have been eliminated from further study.

Alternative 4 was a four-lane



*Traffic lines up behind a schoolbus as it passes through an intersection at Third Street in Fort Atkinson.*

**INSIDE:** Map of study area showing roadway improvement options

option that followed Jefferson County N from the US 12 Whitewater bypass north to the WIS 26/89 interchange near the Fort Atkinson Municipal Airport. It included constructing interchanges at US 12, County N, County M, and WIS 106.

Alternative 6, a two-lane urban street alternative, included about six miles of roadway from the US 12 Whitewater bypass, north along the existing US 12/Whitewater Avenue alignment to approximately 0.5

miles south of Hackbarth Road, then west to Business 26 and Janesville Avenue. Signalized intersections were proposed at WIS 26 and US 12.

WisDOT Project Manager Scott Simmons said Alternatives 4 and 6 had no public support as well as numerous property and environmental impacts.

WisDOT officials will continue to examine the remaining alternatives described below:

**Alternative 1: No Action.** This "do nothing" alternative is required by law to be studied

*Continued, Page 2*

## To contact us

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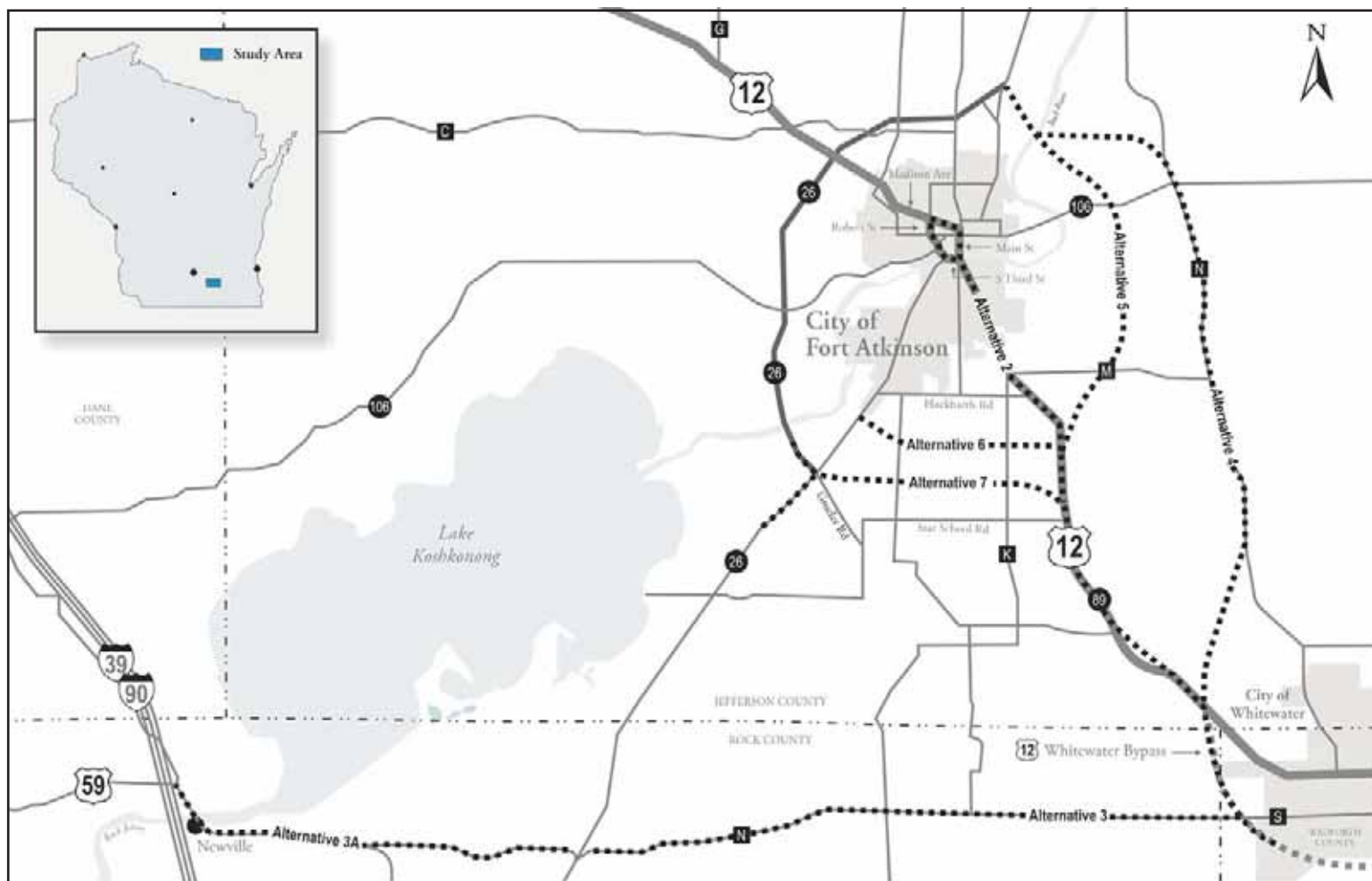
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## April 7 public information meeting scheduled

The public is invited to attend an informational meeting Monday, April 7, that will address the US 12 Environmental Assessment. A presentation will be given at 7 p.m. WisDOT project officials will be available to answer questions and collect comment forms.

**Public information meeting**  
Monday, April 7, 2003, 6:30 to 9 p.m.  
Presentation at 7 p.m.  
Luther Elementary School  
205 Park St., Fort Atkinson

## Study area and alternatives



Continued from Page 1

and becomes the benchmark for comparison of the build alternatives.

### **Alternative 2: Improve the existing alignment**

This reconstruction alternative includes two phases. Phase 1 would include Transportation Systems Management improvements such as turning lanes, removing parking lanes, signing, striping, and signal optimization. Phase 2 would widen US 12 to four lanes from the Whitewater bypass to Madison Avenue and re-stripe Madison Avenue to four lanes from Main Street to Lexington.

### **Alternative 3: County N in Rock County**

Alternative 3 begins at the US 12

Whitewater bypass and continues west on the existing alignments of Walworth County S and Rock County N to the intersection of WIS 26. Alternative 3A continues on Rock County N to the I-39/90 interchange in Newville. The highway would be four lanes between the interstate and the WIS 26 interchange, and would narrow to two lanes from the WIS 26 interchange to the Whitewater bypass. Interchanges would be required at WIS 59, WIS 26, and US 12.

### **Alternative 5: Inner East**

This four-lane alternative would be constructed on new right of way. It includes nine miles of roadway and begins about 1.5 miles northeast of Fort Atkinson

at the US 12 Whitewater bypass and connects to the WIS 26 interchange. Interchanges would be constructed at US 12 and Whitewater Avenue, and WIS 106. There would be an overpass at County M.

### **Alternative 7: Outer South**

This rural, four-lane alternative begins at the Whitewater bypass then proceeds northwest along the US 12 alignment about three miles before turning west on a new alignment to connect with the WIS 26 interchange, about three miles further west. Access would be by interchange only from Whitewater Avenue to WIS 26. Interchanges would be constructed at US 12/Whitewater Avenue and WIS 26/Janesville Avenue.

### **Project beginnings**

The US 12 project began in March 2001, when WisDOT officials initiated the US 12 Needs Assessment Study to identify what long-term transportation problems existed along the corridor. The assessment found that regional mobility demands, safety and congestion problems, and public support were primary reasons to begin looking at improvement options for the US 12 corridor.

The EIS will outline the purpose and need for roadway improvement; possible alternatives and their respective environmental consequences; and comments from residents and officials. The Draft EIS is scheduled for publication at the end of 2003.

# Traffic forecasts, land development linked

Traffic forecasts are an essential part of the transportation system decision-making process. It's no wonder one of the most common questions raised by the public during a transportation study is, "How did you get your traffic projections?"

The answer lies in transportation professionals' ability to make essential assumptions based on what they know happened in the past -- and to the best of their knowledge, what might happen in the future -- using the best information available at the time of the study.

In most cases, a fundamental basis for "growing" highway traffic is the assumption that a region's economic trends and travel characteristics will remain generally consistent over the analysis period.

While this approach has proven to provide very reasonable forecasts for rural areas, the technique doesn't hold up as well in an urbanized setting such as Fort Atkinson. This is because of the



*Computer-generated travel-demand models are often used to determine how future land development affects transportation systems.*

dynamic changes in urbanizing area land use that tend to negate the principal assumptions above. Therefore, in the Fort Atkinson area, a computer travel-demand model was used to assist in determining how future land development would affect the transportation system. The Fort Atkinson model includes more than 60 analysis zones.

Future land-use information is typically found in locally approved land-use plans, as in the case of Fort Atkinson and Koshkonong.

The anticipated changes in land use then become input into the travel-demand model, which generates the number of future new trips that can be expected in currently undeveloped areas.

Ultimately, by combining the trend analyses done for rural areas to the land-development-based forecasts completed in an urban area, project engineers and planners are able to get a pretty good idea of what future traffic volumes might look like over the design life of a highway.

## Document states need for improvements

The purpose and need statement is a critical element of an Environmental Impact Statement, or EIS.

This section of the EIS sets forth why WisDOT is pursuing improvements to US 12 in the Fort Atkinson area.

US 12 is designated one of Wisconsin's "Connector Routes" and is part of the National Highway System. This means it must meet certain criteria, including connecting the state's "Backbone Routes," such as interstate highways; connecting the state's trade centers, such as Fort Atkinson and Whitewater;

and providing access to the state's manufacturing and agricultural centers, such as Jefferson County.

A Connector Route is intended to carry larger volumes of traffic, especially heavy truck traffic. Therefore, the criteria include the highest standards of roadway width, safety, passing opportunity and driving comfort. For US 12 in the Fort Atkinson area, the purpose of improvements is to:

- Improve current and future regional traffic flow to serve interstate and interregional travelers.

- Improve safety for all users.
- Ensure the highway meets the goal of a Corridors 2020 Connector Route.
- Improve congestion on US 12 in the study area.
- Improve or maintain the economic vitality of the area.

Identified needs for improvement include:

- Providing regional mobility by addressing congestion and safety problems.
- Handling heavy truck traffic.
- Addressing land access conflicts including the large number of driveways and roadway intersections.



## Environmental justice: Equity sought in transportation planning

Public involvement is for absolutely everyone.

WisDOT is committed to equity and fairness, and it wants to ensure that no one is excluded from the US 12 project decision-making process.

Identifying and addressing disproportionately high and adverse effects on minority, low-income, disabled or elderly individuals will help achieve environmental justice and promote non-discrimination in your community.

If you know of anyone who may be impacted by this project and whose voice is not being heard, please contact WisDOT Project Manager Scott Simmons at (608) 246-5444.

Luther Elementary School, where the April 7 public information meeting is to be held, is wheelchair-accessible. For further information about or to place a request for assistance at the meeting, please call Simmons or the WisDOT Telephone Device for the Deaf (TDD) at (608) 246-5385.

## Study time line

	2003												2004										
	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	April	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	April	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.
Consensus-building meetings held																							
Traffic and land-use studies conducted																							
Reconstruction alternatives identified																							
Public information meeting No. 2																							
Reconstruction alternatives refined																							
Public information meeting No. 3																							
Draft EIS reviewed, published																							
Public hearing on EIS held																							
Public issues addressed/final EIS published																							
Record of Decision published																							

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U.S. HIGHWAY 12



NEEDS ASSESSMENT



# YOU'RE INVITED

## to the US 12 Environmental Impact Statement

### Public information meeting

**Date:** Wednesday, April 7, 2003

**Time:** 6:30 to 9 p.m., with a presentation at 7 p.m.

**Place:** Luther Elementary School  
 205 Park St., Fort Atkinson

Study Team members will be on hand to answer questions.